

remained in doubt as to their true nature. Agassiz says himself in his Preface: "I can never forget the impression produced upon me by the sight of these creatures, furnished with appendages resembling wings, yet belonging, as I had satisfied myself, to the class of fishes. Here was a type entirely new to us, about to reënter (for the first time since it had ceased to exist) the series of beings; nor could anything, thus far revealed from extinct creations, have led us to anticipate its existence. So true is it that observation alone is a safe guide to the laws of development of organized beings, and that we must be on our guard against all those systems of transformation of species so lightly invented by the imagination."

The author goes on to state that the discovery of these fossils was mainly due to Hugh Miller, and that his own work had been confined to the identification of their character and the determination of their relations to the already known fossil fishes. This work, upon a type so extraordinary, implied, however, innumerable and reiterated comparisons, and a minute study of the least fragments of the remains which could be procured. The materials were chiefly obtained in Scotland; but Sir Roderick Murchison also contributed his own